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SEIU 1199NE

Before the Human Services Committee

In Support of SB 989 An Act Concerning Nursing Homes

Good Afternoon Senator Lesser, Senator Hochadel, Representative Gilchrest, Representative Garibay, and Members of the Committee. My name is Lurette Newell, I live in Manchester, I am a Certified Nursing Assistant employed at Westside Care Center in Manchester. I am here today to testify in support of SB 989 and improving staffing in nursing homes.

I became a Nurse's Aide over twenty years ago. I entered the field because of my grandmother who was very dear to me. I loved her tremendously, and cared for her in her final years. Through this experience it became apparent to me that I enjoyed caring for the elderly, so I decided to make caring for the elderly my career.

My job as a CNA has been very rewarding but it has changed drastically over the past twenty years. I am no longer able to sit with my residents when they need to talk, nor am I able to soak their feet, and care for them the way I want to take care of them. I am constantly running from one resident to another to get the basic care completed. My day consists of washing, dressing, and getting these residents out of their beds daily, things that we take for granted. Residents need to be toileted on a two hour schedule. I also have two meals to assist them with. Feeding can take up to twenty minutes per resident for the ones that need to be fed.

It is time that we realize that the nursing home of twenty years ago that cared for people who needed basic personal assistance has evolved into a complex clinical setting with individuals who require much more care and supervision than years past. Staffing levels must reflect the needs of the population we now care for. It is not uncommon to have a mix of residents: Alzheimer's, Behavioral, Substance abuse, and Alcohol Abuse residents coming from the hospital. Residents that were once cared for in a hospital setting are now being sent to the nursing home. Residents need our love and affection and we are not able to give this to them due to the lack of time with the current staffing levels. Connecticut residents living in a nursing home should be a priority to the Legislature of Connecticut.

We are asking you to raise the staffing standards for nursing homes to improve the lives of residents and caregivers. Our workload is twice what it was and we cannot give residents the level of care that they deserve. At this point, I can't keep doing this work. I was planning on staying in nursing homes for another few years, but sadly I will be another statistic of someone

leaving this field. There are so many injuries at work, and if I keep going I'll be crippled. Please help us to solve this crisis. Pass SB 989.

Thank you for your time.